

# Liaison

Library Association News-Sheet

News Editors: R. G. Surridge and D. R. Jamieson

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## BRITISH LIBRARIANS TO EDIT TOP AMERICAN JOURNALS

(*Tell them at home: "North Finchley can be proud..."*)

British librarians will be interested in the news just received from America, of the appointment of two new library periodical editors. Eric Moon, former editor of *Liaison*, has been appointed editor of the *American Library Journal* (published by Bowkers). John Wakeman, who left this country three years ago to work in the Public Relations Department of the Brooklyn Public Library, becomes editor of the *Wilson Library Bulletin* as from the January, 1960 issue.

Coincidence in the form of the simultaneous appointment of English librarians as editors of the big two American library periodicals is emphasized by the fact that Mr. Moon and Mr. Wakeman worked together in the same branch library in North Finchley.

Members will be aware of negotiations that have been quietly proceeding between the American, Canadian and British library professions for mutual understanding and a means of equating qualifications. Much nonsense has been said publicly about the value of British qualifications in Canada and America, and it is felt that in these appointments America honours the British profession by recognizing the abilities of British-trained librarians.

### Nalgo goes to Woolworths

The days, back in 1910, when Nalgo shared five rooms with the L.A. in Bloomsbury Square, at a rent of five pounds a month, will soon seem even more remote.

Next year the Association, now representing about a quarter of million members, is to move its headquarters into offices in the new Woolworth's administration building in Marylebone Road. Nalgo have leased part of one wing which will give them four floors, plus a basement garage, in which it is planned to provide a council chamber, committee rooms, offices, and a canteen.

### £2m. LIBRARY FOR U.N.

The Ford Foundation has given \$6,200,000 (over £2m.) to the United Nations to defray the costs of a new building to house the United Nations library. This was announced in New York at the end of September by the U.N. Secretary-General in a report surveying the limitations of the present structure and explaining the plans for rebuilding it on the same site.

#### Pent-house lounge

The new library will consist of a six-storey building, three storeys above ground and three below, surmounted by what is described as a "pent-house lounge". The existing floor space will be doubled and will make it possible to house 400,000 books instead of the present 200,000. According to Mr. Hammarskjöld, the new library "will complete the group of buildings around the Plaza and will add much to its attractiveness."

The architects will be those principally responsible for the main United Nations building.

### TORQUAY REPORT

# *Torrents of Tabulated Tripe*

William Tynemouth's paper, "Value and Values", was in fact a barbed attack on the librarian as amateur statistician. He diagnosed the biblio-statistician as too frequently an exhibitionist, somewhat less than a competent mathematician, or on occasion a plain liar. In a resounding denigration of our "annual torrents of tabulated tripe" Mr. Tynemouth urged the need for statistics honestly compiled under expert guidance as an essential tool of administration.

Mr. Tynemouth pleased all of his hearers. Those who understood the serious content of his paper enjoyed to the full his acutely perceptive approach to library administration. The rest were delighted with his edged wit and admirable delivery. More than some, this paper deserves serious consideration upon its subsequent appearance in the Conference Proceedings, not least for a series of suggestions on the compilation of statistics, both nationally and locally. The discussion was, for the most part, mildly entertaining but did not greatly develop Mr. Tynemouth's theme.

## **Enterprising Publicity Effort at Torquay Conference**

The L.A. each year approaches many of the national newspapers and reporting agencies in connection with its annual conference, and supplies advance copies of the papers being presented. The S.W. Branch decided to arrange a press conference immediately following the Presidential Address at which the press, radio and television representatives could have the opportunity of meeting the principal speakers and the visiting librarians from overseas. An invitation was sent to all the newspapers on the Chaucer House list and also to local newspapers in the South West, to the B.B.C. in London and the West Region, and to the I.T.A. in the area—in all about 40 invitations.

On more general matters every chief librarian in the Branch's area received a letter asking them to inspire articles in the local newspapers at the time of the Conference and to draw attention to the work of all types of libraries. The S.W. Branch made many suggestions to the B.B.C. and the I.T.A. as to possible short feature items, and details of the award of the Carnegie Medal were sent to various people whom it was thought might be able to use the story.

The immediate response to these approaches was not overwhelming but good reports appeared in local newspapers and in *The Times*. The B.B.C. made reference to the papers, and interviews were arranged with the Branch chairman and with some of the overseas visitors. The B.B.C. were also encouraging in their reception of our various suggestions for future features and it is hoped that some of these may be heard or seen later this year.

## **A MAJOR THREAT**

As was foreshadowed in the February *Liaison*, the paper by Alderman F. J. Stott, formerly Chairman of Plymouth Public Libraries Committee, was one of the major points of interest when he addressed the Torquay conference at its final session. In the

most socially conscious paper of the whole assembly, Ald. Stott delivered a strong attack on television, when he stressed that "it is a major threat to the individual, for, as with any form of mass influence, if it is not kept in perspective it will create mental and physical inertia, mass hysteria and mass emotions".

The alderman went on to say that in television lay the special challenge to the public library service. "More than any other medium the public libraries can serve the masses while sustaining and assisting them as individuals." To support his claim he produced statistics obtained from a survey prepared for the South Western Branch of the L.A. One revealing figure which made many librarians in the hall sit up and take notice was that in Plymouth it was estimated that whereas 33½ million hours were spent each year by children in attendance at primary, secondary and grammar schools, 36½ million leisure hours were devoted to reading. Yet the City's expenditure on its public library service was £80,000—a mere thirtieth of the sum spent on formal education.

### **"Form the habit—then keep it"**

Children's libraries came under the speaker's scrutiny. It was his belief that "the ideal is to create in children the library habit, to make a visit to the library a natural and essential part of their lives; to create in them, through happy, lively association, the desire to read". And once the habit is formed, everything humanly possible must be done to see that the habit remains.

Alderman Stott spoke of the large sections of the community who were unaware "of the very many ways in which books can help them in their own particular ways of living". It was "a fundamental responsibility of libraries individually, and through the Library Association collectively, to promote an appreciative and, if necessary, a critical awareness of the standards of public library services in this country".

# THE TWO CONCEPTIONS

Much has already been said about the Roberts Committee Report, and no doubt it will continue to attract comment for some long time to come, but no one is able to summarize and explain its recommendations with the same authority as Sir Sydney Roberts. This was made abundantly clear when he addressed a general session of the Conference. With masterly clarity and pungent wit he outlined for members the task set before his committee by the Minister of Education and summarized the reasons and arguments which had led the members to formulate their recommendations.

The terms of reference given to the committee had required it to concentrate upon alterations considered desirable in the administrative arrangements of public libraries in England and Wales, and when evidence was considered from the various interested bodies it became obvious that there were two basically different conceptions of the role which public libraries should play in society. The view that libraries are potentially a major social force which should be organized on a national basis was challenged by the opinion that each community should feel free to provide whatever level of service seemed desirable to its own elected representatives.

### Task for the counties

There was general agreement that public libraries should continue to operate within the framework of local government, and it was the task of the committee to devise means which would enable them to run their services efficiently. In recommending the transfer of powers from the smallest authorities it was fully recognized that absorption depends upon the counties having adequate book funds and stocks. A wider vision and greater sense of their responsibilities must be shown by library committees, whilst there must be more co-operation amongst librarians.

### Another man's delight

In discussing the question of library co-operation, Sir Sydney was fully aware of the disappointment which has been expressed concerning the limited changes advised, but he argued that an overall national plan had not been called for, and that such a conception would have led to the pigeon-holing of the Report.

Recommendations upon which there was complete unanimity included those on staffing and buildings, and their implementation was greatly to be desired. A more controversial question was that of book selection, and the proportion of light reading which should be provided, but Sir Sydney took the view that "one man's rubbish is another man's delight". Libraries must promote the use of books and exploit their ability to satisfy those needs of society created by the increase of leisure in modern life.

### "A packed jury"

The discussion which followed concentrated, perhaps inevitably, upon the questions of library powers and recommended standards, and accurately reflected Sir Sydney's statement of the two conceptions of librarianship. Criticism levelled from the floor included the view that the Roberts Committee was a "packed jury" upholding the idea that might is right, that the Ministry of Education was suspect and H.M. Inspectors a menace, and that the Report ignored the maxim that those who pay the piper should call the tune. However, Alderman Lipson, Cheltenham, considered the Report had already proved most valuable in raising standards, whilst Councillor Walsh, Scarborough, a member of the A.M.C. Libraries Committee, considered the Report "a valuable and moderate document". Mr. Lace, County Librarian of Essex, pointed out that the transfer of powers would not be a one-way traffic, and Mr. Christopher, Librarian of Penge, urged those small authorities wishing to retain their power to prove their ability by raising their standards.

In a most lucid reply to the discussion, Sir Sydney Roberts made it clear that his Report did not favour any sudden or dictatorial change, but had been designed to suggest a real need for all-round improvement.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editors would like to thank those colleagues who have assisted in the reporting of the Annual Conference. They include Messrs. C. M. Hartley, H. R. Mainwood, P. Caldwell, J. H. Jones, T. E. Callander, K. Stockham and J. C. Harrison.

# *Swedish Rhapsody*

*A group of fourteen British librarians recently visited Sweden at the invitation of the Swedish Institute and the Swedish Library Association. Liaison asked Mr. Jack Dove to put down his immediate, personal impressions of what he saw.*

A hectic nine days, August 23rd to 31st, with 17 libraries visited and some 600 miles of Swedish territory covered, from Malmö in the South, to Östersund in the centre and but 3° of latitude from the Arctic circle. But nothing freezing here. The mosquito had taken himself away four weeks before and the snowman had not yet packed his bags. Little sunshine to cheer us on our way; instead humidity, followed by persistent cloud, rain and mist. The weather was of little consequence however in the efficiently organized tour which saw us in the first library less than 12 hours after leaving British soil. And some folk say it was a holiday!

My impressions are many, my memories vivid and my overall assessment very high. The buildings varied from the brand new—the Östersund Library undertaking municipal and county functions—to the adapted premises at Malmö and Norrköping. All were scrupulously clean, spacious, airy, colourful, and inviting—with one exception, the Stockholm Central Library. Even a paintbrush would work wonders in this edifice, like a submarine's conning tower gone wrong. Indeed an architect's maniacal concoction.

## **Les Girls**

Feminine staff are in an almost 100 per cent majority. Well might they sing "Thank heaven for little girls". But not so little. Ooh, la, la! Attractive, pleasant, tremendously hospitable and with such a universal command of the English language that I felt quite awkward when I met the odd person who could not make herself readily understood. There is general acceptance of the division of staff into professional and clerical. *Librarians are librarians.* A University degree, followed by 6 months at the Library School and 6 months practical training. School expenses are paid by the students themselves! Stockholm has its own training school for its own staff and awards its own degree . . . There were some things I couldn't understand though my questions were many and the answers polite but unconvincing.

Financial provision is generous and the various authorities must gladly accept a full library service as an absolutely essential part of a local municipality's activities. I say full, because by our standards staff are more numerous, book stocks are comprehensive and branch and/or mobile libraries are liberally established. And the use made of them is less than in the United Kingdom both by percentage of population and by number of books borrowed.

At Lund, we saw the University Library, with its fine recent extension; its stack capacity increased from 150,000 vols. to 1 million by the installation of Electrolux Compactus shelving; the smallest book

in the world—a Prayer Book only 4 in. square; and its registers of books loaned to all parts of the world. At Malmö, we saw Kockums Technical Library serving a shipbuilding firm with a family tradition, employing 6,000 people and never a strike! I couldn't help feeling there was a language problem here when I saw the array of foreign periodicals and heard of the listing and abstracting that is done, but I was told that even Japanese journals did not pose insuperable difficulties.

## **Magnificent Västerås**

The Biblioteksjanst is a central agency for the provision of library supplies and equipment, from printed catalogue cards and posters to pencils and plastic jackets, though development in the latter is slow. Library bookstocks generally suffered by lack of colour from publishers jackets and too uniform a style of binding. But not at Västerås, a magnificent library, opened 1954, serving 74,000 people and designed by Sven Ahlbom, Sweden's foremost architect. A budget of £127,000: £25,000 on books and a building that no words of mine could ever adequately describe. Some of my 50 colour slides might help in due course. There were 7,200 novels on the shelves, most plastic jacketed. What a sight! We have nothing to equal this, I am certain. The theatre is a gem, too.

There is a Library Division of the Board of Education; its head, Bengt Hjelmqvist, addressed our annual conference in 1954. Why should we fear state recognition and advice? We have a lot to learn in this direction and from the Biblioteksjanst.

Four days at the end of the tour in the mountains were for well deserved recuperation. But this cross-section of British librarianship wasn't to be denied its mountain climbing exploits, the chair lift, nor a trip to Trondheim to see its magnificent cathedral with the fourth largest organ in the world. And we had a Mendelssohn Sonata in D minor which the organist came in especially to play. For me, a highlight. [Mr. Dove is, as well, a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, and an A.R.A.M.—Ed.]

### *Swedish Rhapsody (cont.)*

Such visits are to be welcomed and encouraged. Nothing but good can result. The arrangements were punctilious and everything went smoothly from the moment we set foot in Malmö on the 23rd at 11.30 a.m. to our departure on September 5th at 22.30. And Malmö... First to see us, last to cheer us on our way.

A memorable trip, which for me, makes an early return to Sweden a must. For its libraries? Of course—and all that goes with them, too.

### **Black or white, madam?**

Another member of the party, Mr. P. Hepworth, returned from Sweden to persuade his Committee that Norwich should assimilate some of the Swedish atmosphere by serving coffee and biscuits twice a day in the reading room of their new library: he succeeded. Mr. Hepworth pressed the Committee to replace the "serried rows of institutional seats and tables" by comfortable chairs and occasional tables, again in an effort to introduce something of the more informal air of Sweden's libraries.

"In this country," said Mr. Hepworth, "we produce perhaps two designs in book shelves and newspaper stands for libraries. In Sweden we saw twenty or thirty designs in one library." He found the Swedish libraries beginning to use photocharging. But their bookbindings on the whole were (as Mr. Dove noted) rather drab and Mr. Hepworth did not think that their office methods were up to English standards. Although the interior decoration and fittings of the Swedish libraries were remarkably attractive, many of the buildings themselves he thought were badly planned, resulting in extra work for the staff.

### **A Books-in-Welsh Plan**

A Welsh Books Council should be established to promote the publication of books in Welsh, to satisfy the needs of the general public and libraries. Addressing a meeting of over 150 representatives of Welsh local authorities and the books trade in Cardiff recently, Mr. A. R. Edwards, Librarian of Cardiganshire, said there were three main reasons for establishing such a Council: the inability of the public libraries to provide sufficient service to Welsh readers; the failure of Welsh publishers to meet the needs of libraries; the need to reconcile the interests of both libraries and publishers for the national as well as their own mutual benefit. "In the whole history of local government", said Mr. Edwards, "I do not know of any parallel where a service is forced to become inefficient and ineffective owing to the shortage of the basic requirements".

Delegates to the meeting are reporting back to their authorities and a further meeting will be held later this year in Cardiff, to discuss the actual membership and financing of the Council.

## **Aristocrat of Paper Backs**

The design and printing of the Penguin book were described by Mr. Hans Schmoller at a recent meeting in Manchester of the Design and Industries Association. The original "visual recipe" of a cover divided into three horizontal panels has latterly been altered to a division into vertical panels "which it was felt would help to enhance the height-to-width proportions of the books".

"Just how perfect these proportions are was brought home to me once again this morning when I spent some hours in the John Rylands Library with its unique collection of books printed by Aldus Manutius in Venice 460 years ago." Not only the format of the Aldine books (whose proportions, remarked Mr. Schmoller, were precisely those of the Penguin) but the consistent treatment of every detail of typography were reminiscent of the discipline employed by the publishers at Harmondsworth.

### **Penguin set the standard**

"Our experience has been that the composition rules which we drew up for use in all Penguin books—a set of rules dealing with the minutiae of typesetting, spacing, make-up, etc.—are not only observed with remarkable care by our printers, but have begun to become the accepted standard which these printers use for non-Penguin work as well. Indeed, we are often asked by printing schools throughout the country to supply them with sets of these rules. Their merit, if such it be, is that they are concise and strictly practical. They codify and cover perhaps 90 per cent. of the individual points that need a clear-cut answer; they purposely omit the remaining 10 per cent. which would greatly extend their length, but would be of practical use in only somewhat rare instances."

The speaker referred to the use of illustrated covers as a "brief excursion into the deceptive field of mass appeal on a fairly broad front". Under the guidance of Abram Games, Penguins issued a group of books with pictorial covers different from anything the British paperback market had seen before. "The effect on sales was small or non-existent, while at the same time it became apparent that we were losing a lot of good will, and equally apparent that we were throwing away one of our greatest assets—namely the ability of everybody to see from a great distance that over there is a Penguin."

### **Good design "invisible"**

"What becomes increasingly clear to me, as a designer", Mr. Schmoller concluded, "is that not one person in perhaps a thousand is in the least conscious of all the little artifices and subtleties of which we are inclined to be rather proud. This, surely, is just as it should be, for, as has been cleverly said, 'Good design should be invisible'."

## The Luddites and Fossil-Hunters

At the AAL session of the Conference Harold Smith stood in front of a sky-blue backdrop proclaiming "Welcome to the Spa" and fired off a succession of salvos to puncture any complacency about our library services.

"Librarianship harbours too many coin and butterfly collectors . . . too many diggers, potters and fossil-hunters—and not enough single-minded book-directed librarians. In the age of scientific revolution the library service must cease being a recreational adjunct . . . pleasant . . . but not indispensable . . . and it must adopt a positive informational and educational role. Library schools are . . . in danger of becoming involved in parochial ambitions . . . fewer, larger library schools should be our aim."

On the Roberts report, "after Kenyon, after McColvin, this is meek and mild stuff indeed". The "infamous observations" of the A.M.C., which Mr. Smith referred to as the library Luddite movement, also came in for criticism.

On the British Museum Library: "this is not the library of an insignificant, impoverished parish—although it might well be—judging by the way we treat it . . . it is time the British Museum shed their horse and buggy ways."

Comparison of our national library and bibliographic services with the United States and the Soviet Union only underline, on the whole, our poverty in this field and remedies were urgently needed. A Libraries Act is needed which will weld together all the elements in the British public library system. For the B.M., Mr. Smith urged an increased income, a Department of Reference and Bibliography to provide bibliographic aids and Telex links between the B.M., the National and Scottish Central Libraries, the Regional Bureaux, the Science Library, the Patent Office Library and major "Regional" Reference Libraries.

An uninhibited, forward-looking paper coming like a breath of fresh air, and a reminder that we have not yet fulfilled all of Edward Edwards' aims.

### Studies in Public Relations

An interesting series of lectures for senior librarians, which will examine methods of relating library services to community needs and means of attracting for library services the necessary use and support, commenced at the School of Librarianship, North-Western Polytechnic, on October 13th. The first lecture was given by Alan Eden-Green, Director of Public Relations, Josiah Wedgwood and Sons.

Later lectures will be given by E. V. Corbett (Wandsworth) and W. A. Taylor (St. Pancras), L. R. McColvin (Westminster), C. W. Hanson (Head of Research, Aslib), J. W. Scott (University College, London) and H. D. Barry (Secretary of the Library Association).

The fees for the course are one guinea, or 5s. for single lectures. Enquiries should be made to the Department of Librarianship, N.W. Polytechnic.

### President's Address

## FUGITIVE THOUGHTS OF A READER

In his Presidential Address Earl Attlee who referred to himself as "an unskilled labourer" gave a speech that was remarkable for its humour and its humanity. It began with the reminder from our President that his interest in libraries had extended over the greater part of his life and he noted with pleasure that there was present at this meeting an old colleague, Alderman Lawder, who had served with him on the Stepney Libraries Committee thirty years ago. He described the problems that all booklovers have when they own a personal library.

It was however as an inveterate reader that he came before us, stressing how often it is that one's views are formed from the reading that is done when one is young. As a young man he was frequently found browsing among his books, an activity that was quite useful "even for a political career". With the compelling phrase that "Reading is a preparation for life", Earl Attlee enlarged upon the theme that throughout his life his work had been illuminated by what he had read. He delighted his audience by admitting that he had picked up a lot of information from detective stories. Reading had also been a source of great comfort to him in moments of high tension.

The activities of librarians very much encouraged him, and he spoke warmly of the great expansion of the library service. For him "reading is an exercise and an adventure and it is great fun to go into a library and see what you can find". This was an excellent and wise address with a speaker in absolute control of his audience and on a theme in which he was sincere.

## 'DEPRESSED, MALTREATED'

Miss F. E. Cook, speaking at the County Libraries Section meeting, began by affirming that county libraries are the future. She stressed the need for county libraries to improve their services, and particularly mentioned the urgent need for library buildings and for separate library committees with county librarians who have chief officer status. Miss Cook suggested that county libraries might have made better progress if, instead of coming under Education Committees, they had been attached to the Fire Brigade or Highways and Bridges Departments. She even suggested that it would need a Devlin Commission to learn about the depression and maltreatment of county librarians under Chief Education Officers.

In considering staff training in the future she called for another graduate school of librarianship, organized on the pattern of medical teaching schools with tutor librarians attached to the staff of county libraries. Miss Cook's forthright address aroused Alderman Mrs. Cobbett to invite her to visit Surrey to see how a county library system should be run, while Col. Lloyd-Baker (Gloucestershire) remained unconvinced that progress would necessarily be made without the backing of the powerful and influential Education Committee.

## Pirating of British Books

The Tokyo agent of the Oxford University Press has filed a complaint with the Japanese police that "pirate editions" of British scientific books are being published in Japan in violation of Japanese copyright laws.

He has found six O.U.P. publications, including *The Quantum Theory of Radiation* and *Physical Chemistry*, which were sold in Japan at price a quarter to a fifth of those of the authentic editions, and they were believed to be photographic reproductions. He had also found a "catalogue of reproduced editions of foreign books" listing more than 100 foreign titles, some half of them British and the others mostly American, offering mainly school, scientific and technical books at a sixth to a tenth of their English prices.

Piracy of English books in the Far East is nothing new, and is indeed part of the bigger problem of goods being sold under bogus merchandise marks. But some British publishers have been alarmed to learn that two firms in Formosa are circulating these catalogues of British books at cut prices throughout the Far East. Hongkong is one of the main markets for these pirated editions, and it has been stated recently that the Hongkong representative of a consortium of British publishers lately obtained a pirated edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* from Formosa at about a sixth of its proper cost.

## The Reasons Why Not

The City Librarian of Edinburgh replied recently in *The Scotsman* to a correspondent who, commenting on the fact that public library books "when no longer required are disposed of as waste paper", suggested: "It would seem more profitable for the library to permit books, already scarce and out-of-print, to be bought by those who want them."

### Mr. C. S. Minto wrote—

There are many considerations which, over the years, have influenced public libraries in general to adopt a policy of non-sale of books no longer required. Among these, in random order, are:

1. The legal sanction for sale has always been in some doubt, though it must be admitted that in my experience no library which has sold a book or books has had its action challenged in court.
2. The purpose of the public library is to lend, and it is important for obvious reasons to preserve the principle that the public library's books should only be in possession of readers when properly registered as on loan to them.
3. The cancellation of marks of ownership is a difficult and time-consuming task that it is quite uneconomic for the library to undertake and is clearly something not to be encouraged by others.
4. The official certification of transfer of ownership which would be necessary and the creation of a satisfactory records and sales organizations would also almost certainly be uneconomic.
5. It would be wrong in principle for the public authority to be in competition with booksellers.
6. Most books withdrawn from circulation are so withdrawn because they have become, through use, unacceptable to the borrowers. Such books should surely be regarded as unsaleable.

Your correspondent (continued Mr. Minto) refers to books "already scarce and out of print." Such books are seldom disposed of. Most libraries, Edinburgh certainly amongst them, retain last copies of books even if a bit shaky in condition or ensure that they are transferred to some more appropriate specializing library. By this means and by means of a national co-operative scheme of book purchase now in being, which covers all non-fiction books published in this country, borrowers can be assured that books will be available on loan when required.

## IS THE BOOK DOOMED?

In his paper given at the Youth Libraries Section meeting on "The past, present and future of the printed page", Professor Lancelot Hogben invited consideration of three questions:—

- (1) "Can other means of communication adequately replace the printed page?"
- (2) "Will their rightful exploitation diminish the demand for the printed page relative to the size of the literate public?"
- (3) "How far does a plan of peaceful co-existence for the two call for a new programme of book-design?"

Professor Hogben said that in his view ". . . no sound or screen record can adequately replace book work in the foreseeable future, unless tapes and films with devices for reversing, slowing down and speeding up at will the direction in which flow of information proceeds, collectively become as cheap as books with the same content. In reading, one can skip what is tediously familiar and ponder at length on what is more difficult to grasp. . . . To regard reliance on mechanized instruction without reliance on the printed page as calamitous does not, however, mean that we should also regard more extensive use of sound and T.V. with disfavour, nor that their more extensive use need curtail the need for book learning. . . . The depressing results of school films and broadcasting, offered as a way of keeping children quiet while the teacher corrects test papers, is not a reason for being pessimistic about what should be achievable within the framework of a programme deliberately designed with a *curricular*, in contradistinction to an *aperitif*, aim. . . . I believe that radio, sound and television can solve the modern problem of shortage of talented teacher personnel in a world of wider educational opportunities if, and only if, we can give it a curricular orientation entirely divorced from the prepossessions of the entertainment business. To do so, we must enlist in the effort, people who know the fundamental difference between clean wholesome fun and genuine hard work. Certainly, on this understanding, the exploitation of the newest visual aids will not mean that there will be need for less books in the immediate future."

### Appetite for learning

He believed that the new means at our disposal would do much to speed up universal literacy, and, in fostering an appetite for learning, would provide a powerful stimulus to the output of new informative literature. As to what would be read, he asserted that ". . . teenagers will no longer lap up Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, George Eliot, etc., . . . there now exists a reading public which is too avid for historical knowledge to imbibe information diluted with erotic irrelevance in the grand Victorian manner. . . . I find very hope-making the reluctance of the very young to waste time in reading so many things I read at the same age."

### A second language

Professor Hogben went on to forecast that a new standard of design for books would be required by the new demand, "Only by enlisting the good offices of the book designer will it be possible to supplement what the Telly-Talkies can do usefully by what only the printed page can do at all." The other great need was to make possible ". . . the unification of mankind at the level of speech in the most literal sense of the term. . . . A top level decision to adopt one and the same second language everywhere would confer as a birth-right on every world citizen what every child in Wales already enjoys; the use of its home language for love-making, religion and other exact topics, with the privilege of a second language in which even the most nationalistic Welshman prefers to discuss Atomic Physics or the Gold Standard."

## BRANCH INVESTMENT

Mr. C. H. Ray at the County Libraries Section meeting took as his theme the provision of adequate branch library premises as a direct investment in the service. "A survey shows that in an apparently well served community, a large and coherent section of the public is in practice ignoring the library, and that their goodwill and support can be gained by expenditure on premises designed to avoid institutionalism and to offer an informal atmosphere."

Mr. Ray outlined the considerations affecting the setting up of a county branch library in a market town, and his paper was in fact a useful contribution in the form of a biography of a new building. In this case the new library was sited on the main road to the station, at a road junction and it also had a bus stop outside. The latter was a particularly important point in considering service to rural catchment areas. Those in counties who are responsible for design or administration of branch branch libraries will find some useful hints in his paper.

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Reports of the International Congress of Music Libraries, held in Cambridge, and of a Library Congress which took place in Belgrade recently, have had to be deferred to a later issue.

## Russia Plans Faster, Wider Information Services

The Director of the Russian Institute of Scientific and Technical Information, A. I. Mikhailov, has stated recently that "the first positive results in the mechanization of individual phases of the basic technical process (the compilation of author and subject indexes) have been achieved". However, he declares that the scope of the work at present cannot be regarded as sufficient, because of the present lack of adequate experimental and production facilities. "The need has arisen," says Mikhailov, "to establish a large experimental centre—a laboratory, at the Institute," in which various media for the mechanization of information could be designed. He also says that not only large electro-mechanical, photoelectric and electronic machines should be developed and used, but also various means of "small mechanization", such as photographic methods of typesetting, microphotography, xerography, and new means of rapid reproduction and multiplication of urgently needed materials.

"On the basis of mechanization," says Mikhailov, "the Institute intends to expand its bibliographic reference work and to develop new types of information media."

### New Abstract Journals

In reviewing the Institute's abstracting activities, Mikhailov said that at present the Institute abstracts literature received from 92 countries in 64 languages. In addition to all Soviet literature, it exploits some 11,000 non-Soviet periodicals. In addition to the Institute's regular staff, more than 20,000 outside abstractors and editors participate in the abstracting of scientific and technical literature.

He states that about 4 to 6 months elapse from the moment of receiving the source material to the time when an abstract appears in print. However, measures are being taken, says Mikhailov, to attain during the Seven Year Plan period a time limit of three months for abstracts and one month for the *Express Information* series. The Institute also plans to start publication of the following new *Abstract Journal* (*Referativnyi Zhurnal*) series: Mining, Construction, Transportation, Agriculture, and Public Health.

### Summaries of Science

This broadening of the scope of the *Referativnyi Zhurnal* was foreshadowed by Mikhailov when he spoke at the Washington Conference last November (see January *Liaison*, p. 5). Another project which Mikhailov reported the Russians were planning was a programme of systematic monograph reviews of the world literature in a large number of scientific fields.

It has now been announced that the reviews are to be published as a series under the general title of

## "A.I.Inf.Sci. Preferred"

A large fabricating company in London recently announced in the Appointments column that "vacancies exist in an expanding technical information and library unit". For two of the posts advertised the qualification desired was the A.I.Inf.Sci. It was reported that one applicant demanded to know just what the abbreviation signified. Readers of *Liaison* are better informed, of course, since on two occasions the affairs of the **Institute of Information Scientists** have been noted in these pages.

One might be tempted to conclude that the advertisement was an invitation to a chosen few, for at the end of its first year's existence the membership of the Institute—Fellows, Members, and Associates—numbers about one hundred and fifty. Four meetings have been held during the season: a Presidential address by Dr. G. Malcolm Dyson (well known for his *Short guide to chemical literature*); a meeting on the Washington Conference; a symposium on Russian technical information; and an address by Dr. Alexander King of the E.P.A., and formerly with D.S.I.R., on International aspects of documentation.

"The information scientist," says the Institute's brochure, "should remain primarily a scientist, capable of evaluating the information gathered and of exercising an advisory function. On the other hand, the techniques of information work have now developed to a point where they can be taught and tested by examination . . ." A scheme of examinations is the principal *raison d'être* of the Institute and at the end of its initial year in being it is reported that the first qualifying examinations will be held in the near future.

## Open-to-all Foreign Language Library at Westminster

A special foreign language collection representing over 60 languages has been concentrated at Westminster's South Audley Street library. Original texts, books on the language and literature, encyclopaedias, etc., are included. This collection is additional to the foreign language holdings at Westminster's other libraries. French, German, Italian and Spanish are strongly represented, with useful collections in other languages such as Russian, Portuguese, Catalan, Dutch, Afrikaans and Hebrew, plus a few items at present on the Indo-European, Asiatic and African languages.

Mot books will be lent on any current public library ticket.

*Summaries of Science* (*Itogi Nauki*). Their production is to be the responsibility of six editorial boards, covering biology, metallurgy, chemistry, geology, physics and mathematics. A few titles have already appeared.

## BRIEFLY

India and Pakistan are reported to have agreed on a further, formal joint approach to the British Government for the "return" of the **India Office library**. When the matter was previously discussed in Parliament, in the summer of 1955, it was agreed that there were many reasons to justify refusing to break up the India Office library or to separate it from the other historical records in this country with which it is linked.

**Blackie & Son**, the publishers of educational, scientific and children's books, celebrate in November of this year the 150th anniversary of their formation. The firm has been in the hands of the Blackie family since its foundation in Glasgow in 1809.

Gillingham's new mobile library is making use of a British Railways service which provides a vehicle to tow the mobile to each of its five sites.

Fifty **stereophonic records** are to be bought at Birmingham, to form what is thought will be the first lending library of stereophonic records in the country. A subscription of 30s. a year will be charged for use of the library.

5,700 **records** is the average monthly issue to the 1,750 members of the Leeds record library. This service began in July 1957 with an initial outlay of £4,300; the stock now numbers 3,640 records, composed entirely of L.P.'s. £3,000 is provided in the current year's estimates for new records, of which roughly a third will be replacements for used records. It is estimated at Leeds that each record can be issued between 60 and 70 times before wear and tear necessitate withdrawal for replacement. A microscope is to be provided shortly for examining the stylus used by borrowers in their gramophone pickups.

**Tokens to be dropped?** Norwich are considering dropping the use of token charging at their four main branches and returning to the Browne ticket system.

Difficulties are found to arise when readers keep out their books for too long a period. "We find," says Mr. Hepworth, "that borrowers get very annoyed when they are sent a notice for an overdue book that cannot tell them what the book is. We do not find the token system so satisfactory as photo-charging, which we use at the central library, but that is too expensive for small libraries or branches."

Token charging will probably be retained at Norwich's two smaller branches.

A five-country tour in Asia is to be undertaken this autumn by **Mr. F. Gardner**, Borough Librarian of Luton. Acting as a Unesco consultant on public libraries, Mr. Gardner will visit ten cities in Burma, Ceylon, India, Pakistan and Iran. In 1951 Mr. Gardner went to Delhi as a library adviser to the Indian Government.

Joining the staff at Chaucer House as editorial assistant on the *Subject Index to Periodicals*, is **Miss Patricia Asbury-Williams**, formerly at the Picton Reference Library, Liverpool and latterly in charge of the central lending library at Gloucester, since 1946. Under an exchange scheme during 1954-55 Miss Williams worked for a year in the Social Science Division of Brooklyn Public Library.

A new journal, *Problems in information storage and retrieval*, is to be published in this country by Pergamon, under the editorship of **Mr. J. L. Farradane**. It is intended that the journal shall be, in common with other Pergamon ventures, international in scope with overseas contributors reporting work being done in many parts of the world, including U.S.A., France, the U.S.S.R., and Japan, as well as the U.K. The same publishers have also commissioned from Mr. Farradane a textbook on the technique of abstracting; we understand this is now about half completed.

**Mr. K. Howard Drake**, Librarian and Secretary of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, London, gave the main address at a meeting in New York, on June 24th, at which an International Association of Law Libraries was established.

Nominated by a national magazine as one of the "undiscovered beauties of Manchester" is **Miss Shirley Ross**, an assistant at the Central Lending Library.

**Mr. M. R. Jain**, a librarian-student now working at Walthamstow public libraries, London, would be glad to meet other Indian librarians at present living in the London area.

**Dr. Richard Irvine Best**, a former director of the National Library of Ireland, died in September aged 87. Dr. Best was made assistant director of the Library in 1904, and it was thus that his literary portrait was drawn by James Joyce in a celebrated passage of *Ulysses*. He became director in 1924, a post he held until his retirement in 1940, when he was appointed senior professor of the school of Celtic Studies in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

## THE GAY LOOK

(or just plain nasty?)

The bookbinding world—particularly some of the smaller firms—is gradually becoming alive to the possibilities of plastic jacketing and reinforcement, says Mr. E. V. Corbett (Wandsworth). "A certain amount of competition is noticeable. Whether this will lead to more research into this type of protection, or whether commercial firms may discourage it as potential threat to actual binding, remains to be seen."

Wandsworth are considering whether it would be more economical to set up a small workshop in the borough's central library where plastic jacketing could be carried out by the library's own staff.

### "Lurid" say Berkshire

Readers in Berkshire who have seen these plastic jackets in use by other libraries are asking why their own county library scorns to use them. Mr. V. Jennings, in his annual report, replies that "it is extremely doubtful if there is any virtue in preserving the gaudy and often coarse illustrations with which so many of these jackets seem to be decorated. They are put out," he says, "as a bait for a certain section of the public and to display them on library shelves to attract readers smacks of the blatant publicity of the fairground." Mr. Jennings continues: "There is no getting away from the fact that a certain section of the public will choose a library book because of its lurid cover . . . It is impossible to see how the important functions of a library can be promoted by putting on a show of alluring and tawdry jackets."

It would cost Berkshire about £1,300 to provide one year's accessions with plastic covers. "It seems not unreasonable to argue that such a sum would be better spent on improving the intrinsic value of the book-stock than on embellishing its external appearance," concludes Mr. Jennings.

## SOUND AND PRINT

A cheap means by which sound recordings may be printed in newspapers and magazines has been developed in Japan. The invention promises numerous applications, including an alternative to Braille; but recordings intended to be played in conjunction with articles published in newspapers and periodicals is expected to be its main use.

The paper base, the Synchrosheet, can be coated with a sound recording medium on a conventional rotary press very cheaply, but the cost of the apparatus, the Synchroreader, for playing back recordings made by this method, at present puts it beyond the reach of all but large organizations. Synchrosheets can be played about 2,000 times and as many as 10,000 copies can be taken from one master.

Sonorama, the novel form of French magazine

### ALLSOP SURVEY (from back page)

*Farmer's wife; big comfortable house; new car; Hertfordshire: Books?* No, I wouldn't have them in the house. Too much to do, without sitting around reading. I suppose they might be important for educational reasons, but I don't feel the need for them.

*Lorry-driver; Bedfordshire village:* Never read a book in my life. I was fifteen years in the Army. Lot of the chaps read but I never did myself. I can't see they're important to anyone. Why? My son sometimes reads a detective book or a Western, and I don't mind him doing that if he hasn't anything better to do.

*Wife of a television aerial-rigger; Stevenage New Town:* Oh, Lord, it's so long since I bought a book! I did buy one in 1950, or was it 1951, and I've read that over and over again. No, I can't remember its title or who it was by. We used to go to the library two or three times a week before we got the TV set, but I do like to encourage the children to read and in summer we make sure the box of tricks is shut off so they're out in the air. My husband reads paperbacks a bit, war books.

*Wife of welder in car works; near Luton:* Can't remember when we last read books. TV has made a big change to us. We used to get library books, but nearest library is Luton and it was a bit of a nuisance kind of. The trouble is that I don't like these tuppenny books—I used to like a book by a good author, Maugham and The Saint—and prices are so high. Now I don't get much farther than magazines.

### Books, No TV

Out of the thirty people I spoke to I met one, a solicitor's wife with four children, whose family could be described as habitual readers. She said they "bought books all the time"; inside the house were shelves stuffed with the usual interesting miscellany collected by addicts. They had deliberately not bought a television set as they feared it would be "too much of a distraction".

One in thirty. At the end of the day I was left with the feeling that had I gone on to interview another hundred, the percentage would not have risen.

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publishing which incorporates recordings (described in *Liaison*, November, p. 193) is to be exploited in this country by the Rank Organization. Rank recently acquired rights in Britain, the Commonwealth and U.S.A. for a process developed by a French company for making plastic gramophone records of a thickness of 0.006 in. Now a new company, Rank Sonic Press, has been formed to exploit magazines and children's books and other publications incorporating audible as well as printed matter. The French publishers Hachette are associated with this venture.

# ONE IN THIRTY?

Public libraries are attracting one in three of the population, says the Roberts Report. Four hundred and thirty million books, an increase of over twelve million on the previous year, were issued in 1957-58, reports the L.A.'s annual *Statistics of Public Libraries*. But Kenneth Allsop, book reviewer of the *Daily Mail*, writing in *The Spectator* recently, asks: "Why don't people read more?" And in a private attempt to find out why, he conducted his own enquiry, which he acknowledges is neither balanced nor scientific. But the results, as he suggests, are still of interest.

## Mr. Allsop Asks Why

Curiosity took me out recently round the streets and houses of Camden Town, Hendon and Mill Hill, Stevenage New Town and a Bedfordshire village asking people from different income groups these five questions:

1. When did you last buy a stiff-cover book?
2. What was it?
3. Do you use a public library?
4. Do you think books are important?
5. Has television changed your reading habits?

Here are some representative replies—verbatim:

*Wife of foreman baker; St. Pancras Borough Council flats; two sons, fifteen and sixteen:* As a matter of fact, we did buy some books last week—encyclopaedias they are, but I'm not sure what they're called. A fellow came round the door with them. I thought they'd be educational for the boys. Oh yes, they like to read, they read about the Japanese war. We don't read much, really, but I think books are important like. We don't go to a library. We watch the telly quite a lot but I don't think that's made any difference.

*Sixteen-year-old girl; factory worker; Camden Town:* I buy quite a lot of books, you know, romances and things. Oh, you mean big books. No, never. Well, I did buy one about three years ago, but I can't remember what it was called. Important? Not to me, they aren't—had enough of them at school. Anyway, we all watch the television a lot—there isn't much time for reading.

*Road sweeper; Kentish Town:* Last time I bought a book must be seven or eight years ago. What was it? Oh, God, something to do with electrical appliances. I mostly read cowboy fiction, but not so much of that since we got the telly. It makes a lot of difference. You don't have to strain your brain. It's all created for you, isn't it, saves you creating.

*Wife of motor-salesman; Hendon suburban road; expensively furnished house:* When did I last buy a book? I just don't, that's all. I'm a headliner—you know, I just read the headlines. I like talking. I suppose I have read, gardening books mostly. My son likes reading; I think the last thing he was reading was Churchill's *Memoirs*.

*Housekeeper; large Mill Hill villa:* Never buy books. Why should I? I hate clogging myself up with knick-knacks. I go to the library now and then—I quite enjoy books that tell you how the gentry behaved in olden times. I think books are sort of relaxing, if you like them, but I haven't the time.

*Wife of business executive; big detached house, Hendon; double garage; maid:* I've given up reading for quite a time. The prices put you off, don't they? Actually I like thick, heavy books with lots of print—I used to belong to a book club—but now if I buy anything I buy paper-backs. I don't think TV has made much difference to how much we read in this house. Anyway, my husband hasn't time to read anything except his business papers.

*Man, thirtyish; lathe-operator; Stevenage New Town:* No, I've never bought or borrowed books, either for learning things or entertainment. I reckon you grow out of that. I watch the telly for my entertainment. I suppose they keep the kids out of mischief. Wouldn't mind reading one on sport, something like that. Are they important? Don't ask me, mate!

## High prices . . . little time

*Plumber's wife; Stevenage:* Goodness me, it must be years since we spent money on a book. Of course my husband reads Westerns. Mind you, I do think they're important. I think we're probably missing something, not getting them. I used to like books before I was married, but I mostly knit now. I'd think I was neglecting the house if I sat reading. And prices are so high, aren't they?

*Irish woman; wife of railway worker; Stevenage New Town:* I did used to read before I was married—not romance things, either, and I'm looking forward to the time when I can do some reading again. But with three children, there's not much time left over, I honestly think it's essential to have books, I think everyone should read, and I do want my children to build up a library. I buy a lot of books for them.

*Wife of bricklayer; Stevenage New Town:* We got a set of encyclopaedias some time ago and we haven't got through them yet. Nothing I like better than reading, but I don't get much time. You get a bit into the habit of switching on television when you've a snatch of free time.

(continued on p. 91)